



rural spotlight

Attack of the Allergies

Spring is coming, along with warmer temperatures. Your thoughts may turn to gardening and other outdoor activities. But for those with seasonal allergies, rising mold and pollen counts bring symptoms that can ruin this time of year.

There are ways to combat your nasal nemesis. For starters keep in mind some nasal sprays work most effectively when they are started a week or two before pollen season.

Allergen counts tend to peak in the mid-morning so you might plan outdoor activities before or after that time. You can purchase a dust mask and wear gloves while doing yard work. When you go inside, wash off immediately.

Airing out the house may allow the pesky pollens in through your window screens. Instead turn on the

AC. The same goes for the car, windows up to avoid the sniffles. Set your vent to recirculate air from inside.

Allergy symptoms include itching, stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, and itchy or watery eyes. You can sometimes prevent allergies from acting up by cleaning your nasal passage with a saline solution a couple times a day. If that doesn't work and you're constantly bothered, see a doctor. Sometimes it's necessary to take more aggressive action to keep allergies under control.



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Adult Day Care Benefits

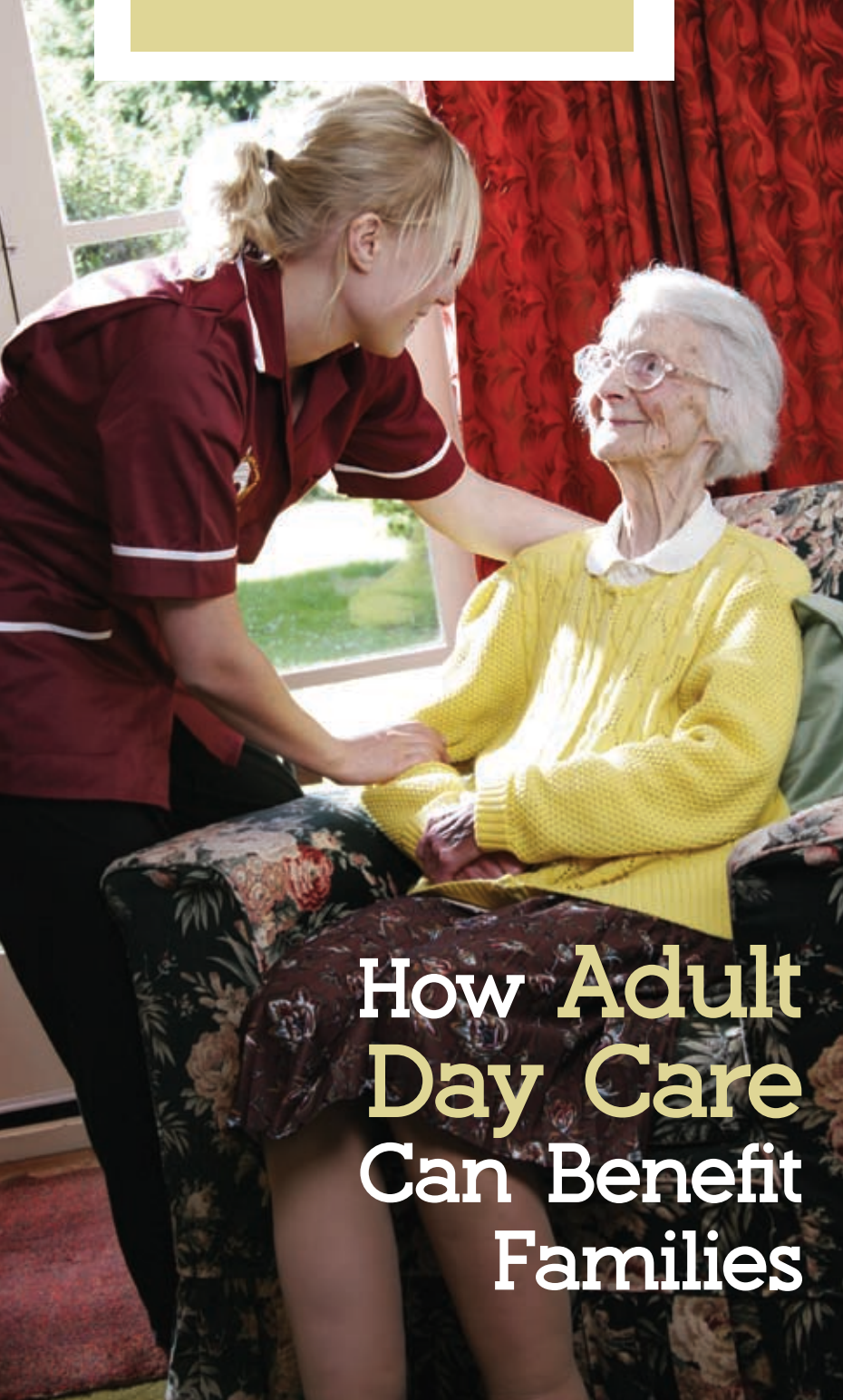
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How Adult Day Care Can Benefit Families

Caring for an elderly or developmentally disabled family member can be rewarding and fulfilling but can also place great physical, emotional and financial demands on those who take care of them.

Missouri has a network of more than 90 adult day care centers to assist caregivers, and offer important opportunities to elderly and disabled adults. Adult day care centers offer respite to many caregivers who just need some time alone. An adult child or spouse can take advantage of a center's services for one or two hours, to get a break from the 24-hour demands of their caregiver role.

Ann Bickel, with the Missouri Adult Day Services Association, said the centers give caregivers the opportunity to go to work or run errands, without worrying about leaving their loved one home alone all day. The centers can offer a wide range of services by providing meals, offering some medical care, and even organizing some activities.

"It's basically a safe and fun place for them to spend the day, rather than be left at home. They do activities. They have supervised care. They have music, art -- they take them on outings. The center in Rolla takes them to baseball games in St. Louis, and takes them fishing. They just do so much," she said. "It's an amazing opportunity for individuals," she said.

You can find a directory of Missouri's adult day care centers online at www.moadsa.org.

Older Americans Month

State officials plan to tackle several of seniors' biggest concerns as part of Older Americans Month in May. Economic security, health care and social activities—these three major concerns of older

Americans will be addressed by several dynamic speakers. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is currently compiling a list of such speakers and encourages you to use these speakers at your own special events in May to mark the month. The department will promote your event through press releases and its Web site, and asks you to secure the venue. We believe this unique promotion will encourage a broad range of seniors to

explore your services, especially those who do not typically attend Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers, or local public health centers.

Local agencies throughout Missouri plan to participate in this major effort to promote active, healthy lifestyles for Missouri seniors. Please contact Charisse.Pappas@dhss.mo.gov if you have questions.

Oral Health:

Did You Know?



Did you know that the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services has various programs devoted to Oral Health? The programs are administered through the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. Services are provided to a wide range of Missourians.

First, did you know that portable dental equipment is housed at various locations across the state known as repository sites? There are currently eleven sites across Missouri, including the Department's warehouse. The portable dental equipment is made available for use by dentists, dental hygienists, and local public health agencies when conducting dental screenings or services away from an office location such as in a school, head start, and etc. The equipment consists of several components including a chair, stool, air compressor, curing light, exam light and the unit. There is no cost to anyone who wants to borrow the equipment; however, the borrower is responsible for pickup and return of the equipment. The Department requires that individuals who borrow the equipment provide basic information on how the equipment was used in order to continue to support the program.

Second, did you know the Elks Mobile Dental Program provides dental care for children and adults with special health care needs and other special populations? The program has two dental vans that travel to various locations throughout the state. The Elks Program sends out notices to individuals with special health care needs to alert them to when a mobile dental unit will be in their area. The vans are wheelchair accessible, fully equipped and staffed. A full range of oral health services can be performed during one trip to the van. The program is done in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, Jackson County Health Department, the Elks Benevolent Trust and the Truman Medical Center East.



Did you know that Missouri has a Donated Dental Services Program? This program is conducted through a contract with the National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped. Dentists and laboratories provide extensive donated time and equipment to provide dental care for qualified applicants who are severely disabled, elderly or chronically ill and lack adequate income to pay for the needed dental care, exclusive of routine dental care. The Missouri coordinator reviews applications for the services and matches approved individuals with a volunteer dentist.

Did you know that fluoride helps prevent dental caries? The Department has Oral Health Consultants that travel the state in their regions, providing instructions and information to schools, head starts,

pre-schools, early childhood learning centers, and etc. about the Oral Health Preventive Services Program (PSP). PSP provides fluoride varnish, toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, and educational literature to participants. A dental screening is conducted by a volunteer dentist or dental hygienist at the same time as the initial application of fluoride. Referrals are initiated for unmet dental needs based upon the information obtained during the screening. Non-identifying information is shared with the Department in order to determine the program's effectiveness. It should be noted that this program will completely replace the fluoride mouth rinse or "swish and spit" after the 2009-2010 school year.

Did you know that the Department has made available K-12 Oral Health Curriculum on its website at <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/oral-health/>? These grade specific power point presentations can be downloaded free of charge and used by school health nurses or teachers and other health care or child care professionals in conjunction with other curriculum.

If you would like to learn more about these programs or other services the Department of Health & Senior Services provides, please visit <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/oralhealth/> and www.mohealthysmiles.com. The Oral Health Program staff can also be reached by calling 800-891-7415 or 573-751-6219. Thank you!

For appointments call: 1-800-876-1486

Making Space for a Garden

Springtime is here, and a lot of Missourians will be spending time out in the garden. But not everyone has a lot of space for a full-fledged garden. Luckily, for people who live in apartments or homes with small yards, a box garden can still provide a good source of fresh vegetables or colorful flowers.

Planter boxes come in lots of shapes and sizes. Large clay pots are extremely heavy, fairly inexpensive, and look good in any home. Plastic is less expensive, but it can become warped, and may not be stable enough to support the weight of the dirt. Concrete is heavy and durable -- but can crack and break if left outside. Wood is an attractive option, but you may have to build the box yourself. It's best to paint a wooden box, so it's less susceptible to rotting from moisture in the soil. If you do use wood, avoid CCA treated lumber and railroad ties.

Most kinds of vegetables can be grown in containers, as long as you leave lots of space for root development. Peppers, radishes, lettuce, and many herbs have shallow root systems, and can grow in more shallow containers. For larger plants, like tomatoes, cucumbers and squash, deeper containers are needed.

The ideal container garden should have excellent drainage for excess water, but should also hold moisture in the soil. It's important to keep your garden well-watered. The best way to do that with a container garden is to use a watering can or sprayer attachment on a garden hose. For most box gardens, a "soiless" potting mix is the best choice. You can buy those mixes from most home and garden stores.

It's also important to make sure your plants are getting plenty of sun. Put them near a window or on a porch where they'll receive at least 5 hours of full sun each day.

When planting your seeds, follow the spacing requirements on the back of the seed package. You should always plant more seeds than you need in a container, because not all of them will germinate. After the seeds have sprouted, thin them to give each plant the space it needs. In no time at all, you'll be enjoying fresh herbs and vegetables straight from your own little garden.



Caring for an Easter Pet



Traditional Easter pets include bunnies and chicks. But before you buy one of these pets for your children remind yourself that baby animals turn into adult animals, and someone is going to have to take care of them.



If you've decided you are up to the task, here's a list of things to keep in mind when caring for your new Easter pets:

Rabbits

A wire cage is best, no smaller than 30" X 30" X 14" for a small rabbit. Keep cages out of the weather and in the shade, because rabbits are very susceptible to heat. Give your rabbit fresh water daily. Pellet food can be supplemented with hay (especially alfalfa).



Chicks

Clear lots of time. You'll need to check on your baby chick several times a day. Keep them warm! Chicks need the warmth of a heat lamp for the first few weeks of their life. If your chicks huddle near the lamp, they're too cold. If they move as far from the lamp as possible, they're too warm. Line the floor of their home with pine shavings or other absorbent material. Get a special feeder and waterer designed for baby chicks, rather than using a regular dish or bowl.



Scavenger Hunt

for Family Fun on a Rainy Day

Spring is notorious for bringing in the rain, ruining cheerful plans of outside activities with your kids. But it doesn't have to be dull, boring, or frustrating inside. With a few careful preparations ahead of time, you can plan on the next rainy day being a day the kids will remember. In fact, they may be wishing for more days of rain.

How about a scavenger hunt? Begin by putting together a list of items the hunters must find. Or make it more challenging

by hiding written clues they must solve in order to find the next clue. Ordinary household items can become extraordinary discoveries. Decide on a prize for those who complete the task.

In addition to staying active on a day that welcomes loafing, you'll have created a memory to last a lifetime.

Tornado Safety

Every spring, Missouri is hit with tornadoes. These storms are capable of devastating entire communities in seconds by reaching up to 300 mile per hour winds. Practicing a plan of action is the best way to prevent you or loved ones from injury or worse in a twister.

The media works to warn you when a storm has the potential to turn into a tornado but sometimes there isn't much warning at all. The wind may die down and the air may become very still. It's possible you may be able to see a cloud of debris rising up from the ground. You may even see clear skies behind a tornado. Statistically tornadoes appear most often between 3 and 9p.m.

The most important tip is to seek shelter immediately when a tornado warning is issued

in your area. Too many times, people think they have more time to escape than they do. If you're in a vehicle or a mobile home, you're not safe. Find the nearest building or storm shelter and get to the lowest level. If there is no basement, get to the center of an interior room away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls. Crouch down and use your hands to protect your head and neck.

If you're outside and can't get inside, do not try to outrun a tornado. Instead, find a low lying area and lay flat while covering your head with your hands. An overpass or bridge does not offer as much protection as it may seem. Most deaths and injuries are caused from flying debris. Being low to the ground will lessen your chance of getting hit.

Information provided
by FEMA

KIDS HEALTH TIP



Microwaves are one of the world's best inventions for convenience. Kids cook with them all the time. Follow these guidelines to ensure the food is being prepared safely.

1. Use only microwave-safe cookware in
2. Never put tinfoil or anything metal in a microwave.
3. Read labels for specific microwave instruction.
4. Use a potholder when removing items to avoid getting burned.

ONE MINUTE WORKOUT:

Sixty seconds of exercise can provide a much needed break for your body.

Do ten reps of each of the following while seated:

- Tap toes on floor while punching arms out.
- Lift right knee, flex foot and kick leg forward.
- Lift left knee, flex foot and kick leg forward.
- Hands on hips, tap both toes on floor.
- Squeeze your bottom tight.

Live Like like your life depends on it.

The "Live Like Your Life Depends On It" campaign promotes awareness of diabetes, colorectal cancer, and eating right.

Early diagnosis of diabetes is critical to successful treatment and delaying or preventing some of its complications such as heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, stroke, amputation and death. Colorectal cancer is one of the most easily prevented cancers because it can develop from polyps that can be removed before they become cancerous. Research shows that increased daily consumption of fruits and vegetables may help prevent both of these chronic diseases.

Spring is a great time to urge Missourians to get screened for diabetes and colorectal cancer, and to promote the benefits of eating right to prevent chronic diseases. For suggestions, see the March calendar under What's New at www.dhss.mo.gov/ChronicDisease/WhatsNew.html. To order "Live Like Your Life Depends On It" campaign materials, go to <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/ChronicDisease/Resources.html>

Correcting Health Myths

skipping meals

Your metabolism doesn't shut down after missing one meal. A metabolic change doesn't occur until the body has been deprived of food for around three days.





A Healthy Recipe for

Spring

Roasted Asparagus and New Potatoes

2 2/3 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
2 pounds of unpeeled small new potatoes, cut in half or thirds
10 cloves of garlic, sliced thin
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
2 3/4 teaspoons kosher salt
1 large bunch fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Pour half the olive oil into large baking dish. Add potato chunks, garlic, rosemary, thyme, and half the salt. Toss together, cover, and bake 20 minutes.

Remove the dish and mix in the remaining ingredients. Cover and cook 20 more minutes until the potatoes are tender.

Increase oven temperature to 450 degrees, uncover the dish, and finish with 5-10 more minutes of cooking, until potatoes are lightly browned. Serve warm or cold.